

CRIME STAINED

Thomas Williamson Confesses to the Murder of Old Man Moore.

From His Earliest Boyhood He has led a Life Devoid of Good and Full of Evil.

A Thief Always and Always Ungrateful for Acts of Kindness, His Story is Revolting in the Extreme.

He did not Kill His Wife, He Says, but Buried Her "Darkly at Dead of Night"—His Many Mashes and His Hope of Going to Heaven.



Thomas A. Williamson.

The BAZOO presents its readers today with the confession of Thomas Williamson, who is at present confined in jail, under sentence of death for the murder of Jefferson Moore and his son, Charles, with the story of which the public is already familiar. The confession is probably correct in many of its details, but in the case of Charles Moore, he attempts to fasten the crime on another and hence shows no appreciation of the fact that he stands with the shadow of death upon him and even at the last, is not capable of the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. The confession is as follows:

LAYS IT TO HIS FATHER.

I first saw the light in Tazewell county, Illinois, April 23rd, 1835. My father being a well to do farmer, with a family consisting of three boys and two girls. I have always been of the opinion that my father worked me too severely in my boyhood days, which accounts for a great many of my misdeeds committed since. Our neighbors were constantly telling him he was stunting my growth by overworking me. What education I have was given me by my good old mother. At the age of ten I committed my first crime, which was the stealing of tobacco. I had been using tobacco three years before my father became aware of the fact. He stored his meat in Joseph Paisley's smokehouse, he being my mother's brother. It was my duty to carry the meat home as often as needed; my uncle Joe kept his tobacco in an old wooden chest, and every time I went after meat I would also pay a visit to that chest and reduce his stock by one plug. I have often thought of this, my first stealing, in after years and would to God He had stricken me down in my first attempt. When this supply of tobacco was exhausted he would send me to Tremont, our nearest town, for a fresh supply. On the way home I would steal a plug and it would never be missed.

IT SEEMED SO EASY TO STEAL

without being discovered that I concluded to try my hand in another direction. On one occasion my father sent me to town with a plow point to be sharpened by Andrew King, the village blacksmith, who on my arrival I found to be absent. I saw a nice pocket knife lying on his work bench and immediately proceeded to take charge of it. On his return he accused me of the theft, which I stoutly denied, and looked so innocent that Mr. King felt very sorry in having accused me of the theft. It came so natural for me to tell a falsehood that I would never change color when telling even a large one. Shortly after this my father moved to what was then a very large prairie. Illinois was not as thickly populated then as it is today. Mr. Orndorff built a town, Oakdale, on a quarter section of land adjoining my father's, like all towns of the period of which I am



"I AM NOT WELL ENOUGH TO WORK." This is a daily event in mills, shops, factories, etc. It is the point where Nature can endure no more, and demands a rest. Then the poor sufferer, worn with toil, and broken in health, stands aside to make room for another. "Quick consumption" they called it.

To this class of women and girls we proffer both sympathy and aid. When those distressing weaknesses and derangements assail you, remember that there is a Remedy for all of them. We have on record thousands of such cases, that have been restored to vigorous health and lives of usefulness.

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writing. It started off with what now would be termed a "boom." During the day I would work at home but all my evenings were spent in Oakdale, where I committed a great many trivial offences, and became well known to all the inhabitants as a very mischievous boy. It was my delight to whip all the other boys and engaged in but very few "street fights," but what I came out victorious. It delighted me very much to

ATTEND WEDDINGS

and I was often away from home to be able to honor the contracting parties with my presence, and every time I could, I would do a mean or mischievous trick. It was my delight to accomplish it. One of our neighbors, Mr. Hodson, had a man employed, who was an excessive drinker of whiskey and would carry it to the field when at work. I often watched him and when he was at work I would steal it, and often became thoroughly intoxicated, this being my first attempt at using intoxicating liquor. The next summer our neighbors, Bennett and Orndorff both had excellent crops of watermelons, so one night I went on an expedition, not because I wanted or needed melons, as we had an abundance of them at home, but merely out of a spirit of mischievousness. Mr. Bennett discovered me in his "patch," I ran and he gave chase. I was too fleet of foot for him and found a secure hiding place on top of his house. My next visit was to Mr. Orndorff's "patch," which I damaged to a great extent. Then I proceeded to test the quality of my father's fruit, when he discovered me and gave me a flogging, the memory of which still lingers in my mind. At one time my father was hawking and I was replanting corn. He asked me if I put corn in each hill I told him that I did. At the end of the row he began watching me and found I had told him a falsehood.

He obtained the limb of a brier bush containing innumerable briars, and flogged me in the same fashion that a pedagogue flogs his unruly students. The pain of that flogging still lingers in my lower extremities. These two floggings were by far the most severe I ever received, and as I look back over those days, my mind assures me they

WERE FULLY DESERVED.

I was unwell for some time, caused by the last flogging, and during the time often wished that I was dead. At this time I was keeping company with a Miss Beal, whose father's farm was one and a quarter miles distant from our place. Probably, kind reader, you may think me rather young to be paying attentions to a young lady, but allow me to inform you I had become a young gentleman of thirty and deeply in love with my adored one, little thinking that my affections were soon to be shattered, which was the case, and in the following manner: My father made a horse trade with Miss Beal's brother which finally resulted in a law suit. My affections for Miss Beal were so strong—and not having the heart to render my evidence against her brother, I being the only witness to the trade, I concluded to run away, and went to Pekin where I hid, remaining there ten weeks. When I returned to Oakdale, my father in the meantime, winning the suit, caused no doubt by my being absent with my valuable evidence. On my return after night into

Oakdale I proceeded to Mr. Hodson's store and robbed it of all the cash in the drawers. They arrested me and I endeavored to put the guilt on a man by the name of Samson, who they immediately took into custody and carried us to Pekin, the county seat, and confined us in the county jail. Mr. Samson obtained his release on a writ of habeas corpus proving clearly that he had nothing to do with the robbery.

I LAY IN JAIL EIGHT WEEKS

and through the efforts of my attorney I obtained a trial, the jury brought a verdict of "not guilty" and I was released, although they said I was a fit subject for the insane asylum. Although I was free again, the experience I had received was of no benefit to me, as it was but a short time until I was in trouble again.

On my release, I obtained employment with my cousin and all went well for a time. I then swore to a falsehood against my Uncle William Williamson. When my cousin settled with me for my labor he paid me all due me, but I disputed it and he immediately paid me what I claimed was due. I now meant to live like a man but the temptation was too great and it was impossible for me to do right. I returned home and found my father had a boarder by the name of Ben Hodson. I retired early and next morning arose before Mr. Hodson was awake and stole all the money he had. My father accused me of the theft, but by my looks of innocence and by telling several falsehoods, I dispelled the idea from their minds.

MY NEXT DEED

was to steal my Cousin Squire William's purse containing a few dollars, of which crime I was never suspected. I next went to Centralia, Ill. I was out of funds. I stole a horse and was caught. They put me in jail, where I laid a week. My father and a Mr. Davis came down and obtained my release by giving bond for \$500 which I "jumped."

I was now 31 years of age, old enough to know and do better, but had made so many resolves to lead a better life, and failing in all of them, that I became disgusted with myself. My ancestors before me were all noted for their high honor and integrity. So my love of crime is not hereditary. I begin to think it comes natural to me to commit any and all manner of crimes. A new era now dawned upon me. War had been declared and President Lincoln issued a call for volunteers. Thinking that war life would benefit me and keep my mind free from any thoughts of misdoing, I enlisted in the Seventh Illinois Infantry under command of General Steele. I remained in this regiment four months. Most of the time being spent in the Bald Knob mountains of Missouri, in search of Gen. F. rest. At the end of four months I gave Gen. Steele \$60 to obtain my papers of honorable discharge which he did. I then went home and remained until the following fall, working at various occupations and made considerable money. During September I enlisted in the 108th Illinois Infantry, Capt. Turner commanding. We were ordered to Memphis, where I went into a hospital on account of sickness. As soon as I recovered I stole Al Sherman's pocket book, it being full of money. Was accused of the theft, but my plausible tale cleared me. Shortly afterwards while on march, our captain

LOST TWO HAMS.

As soon as he discovered his loss, he

immediately formed us into line and endeavored to recover his much prized hams but he was doomed to do without ham, for myself and several comrades had already put those hams where they would do the most good. In fact we came to the conclusion that his system was too delicate and liable to be nauseated by an over dose of that "pork product." We had but very little time in which to prepare them, but they tasted excellent and from that moment I was convinced that the old darkey's theory that "ham w-z mighty sweet" was correct. Our company finally arrived at Lagrange, Tenn. John Edward lost his watch. It is needless to say I got it. I served three years in the army during which I was in hot water several times and in scrapes innumerable. Among the most important battles in which I fought were the siege of Vicksburg, Corinth, Red River, Gettysburg, Lookout Mountain, Montgomery and many others. When the war closed I returned home and went to work for a Mr. Patterson, but it was not long until I was at my old tricks. A Mr. Shivler married a cousin of mine after I returned from the army and we became bosom friends. Soon after his brother-in-law came to visit him, one evening the three of us went over to an old German's house

TO PLAY CARDS,

in a short time we had all the German's money and under the influence of liquor, I fell asleep, and the first thing I knew they were all fighting. I asked Mr. Shivler's brother-in-law, Harket by name, what they were doing. He repeated that he was "going to kill the Dutchman," which he did. The German accused them of beating him out of his money. They buried the body under the house. Shortly after this occurrence Mr. Shivler's wife died, it was rumored that she was poisoned, but the physician's post mortem failed to find any trace of poison. Shortly after the death of Mrs. Shivler, Shivler and Harket were arrested and charged with the murder of the German and lodged in the Perkin jail. After disposing of all of the German's possessions I went to Springfield, Ill., at which place I joined a show and was shortly after arrested for the murder of the German, an affair I witnessed, but in which I had no hand. I was lodged in the Perkin jail with Shivler and Harket and remained there five months.

Shivler and Harket were first tried and turned state's evidence placing the guilt upon my shoulders. I was tried and sentenced to be hung. My attorney petitioned the Governor and he commuted my sentence to 21 years in the penitentiary. By making good time I obtained my release after serving 11 years and nine months, during which time I served the state in various occupations, most of my time being spent looking after the sleeping quarters of the prisoners.

On my release I had three hundred dollars saved which I had made by working overtime. The confinement had a telling effect on my health, being broken down physically. On my release I immediately repaired to the depot and took the first train for home. I was dumfounded at the changes that had taken place, not recognizing my old home until I had

PASSED IT SEVERAL TIMES.

The first news that reached my ears was that my father had died while I was in prison. I never realized what he was to me until after his death. He had led a christian life and went to rest in that beautiful city from where none return. I recuperated for a short time then obtained employment with a Mr. Pomfort, remained with him one year and then tendered my services to Mr. Orndorff with whom I remained a year.

If by chance the history of my life should fall into the hands of any young boy I would caution him to beware of the first chew of tobacco as it never made a man. Beware of the first drink, as it will make you a drunkard. Beware of cards as they will make you a gambler, and the consequences of each and every one is the penitentiary or the gallows. I am now 56 years of age, my past life has been one of crime and evil doings, and might be termed horrible, but the future which I will proceed to portray will be ghastly. The next thing I stole was some money from a neighbor whose name I have forgotten. He accused me of the theft but was not certain; as I had a friend who took sides with me.

WE GAINED OUR POINT.

I afterward borrowed \$8 from my friend and am indebted to him yet for that amount, with interest. I also stole his pistol and hid it in Mr. Orndorff's barn where it was misplaced and I never recovered it. I then came to Missouri spent a few days traveling over the state and went to

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Kansas. One day I fell in with two more men (ex-convicts) and we traveled together three or four days when we stole a chicken and had a dispute over it, when I left them and went on ahead. I shortly afterwards stole a coat and on examining it I found \$30 in one of the pockets. When my two ex-convict chums came along they were arrested for the theft and sentenced to the penitentiary. I have often felt sorry for them as they knew nothing of the theft but being tramps they were convicted, and "justice" was satisfied. I traveled along until I met two men traveling in a wagon. I traveled with them three or four days expecting to get a chance to kill them and rob them of their possessions. But as no opportunity offered itself I left them and went to Kansas City where I remained some time stealing whatever I could get my hands on until I stole a coat and they made it so warm for me that I had to leave.

I then went back to Illinois, met a cousin, stole three head of cattle, drove them to Decatur and tried to sell them which I was unable to do. Was arrested.

CONFINED IN JAIL.

where I remained four months when I had my trial, was convicted and sentenced to three years in the penitentiary and once more found myself in Joliet serving the state which I did for two and one-half years, making good time. On my release I returned to Decatur, obtained employment with a Mr. Adams whom I found to be a very harsh man and who never paid me fully for my services. I left him and obtained work with a Mr. Sturtevant and remained with him about four months. I then left him and went to Oakdale and obtained a contract to cut cord wood. I finished my contract and returned to my old employer Orndorff. At one time I asked him

Continued on Fifth Page.

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